

Richard Moore Kemp House  
601 Caroline Street  
Key West  
Monroe County  
Florida

HABS No. FL-180

HABS  
FLA  
44-KEY  
7-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. FL 180

## RICHARD MOORE KEMP HOUSE

Location: 601 Caroline Street, Key West, Monroe County, Florida.

USGS Key West Quadrangle, Universal Transverse  
Mercator Coordinates: 17.418660.2716150.

Present Owner  
and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. James J. Craig.

Present Use: Residence.

Significance: The building is a fine example of late nineteenth century Key West architecture with no major alterations or additions.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1887-1888.
2. Architect: Probably no formal architectural plans were drawn.
3. Original and subsequent owners: November 20, 1845, James M. Curry and wife, Margaret J., sold part of Lot 4, Square 12, to Samuel Kemp (Deed Book D, p. 92). Samuel Kemp sold part of this property, consisting of the corner lot, to his sons William and Richard M. Kemp on December 14, 1859 (Deed Book F, p. 331). William Kemp sold his interest to Richard M. Kemp in 1869 (Deed Book G, p. 403). The original home was burned in the fire of 1886. The present home was built about 1887-1888. It was sold by the surviving heir, Miss Grace Kemp, to Mr. and Mrs. James J. Craig, May 21, 1960. (Monroe Land Title Company Abstract).
4. Builder: The builder was John T. Sawyer (Reardon interview).
5. Original plan and construction: A wood frame, two-and-a-half story, rectangular building with a two-story veranda inset under the roof on the front.
6. Additions and alterations: There have been no additions and the only alteration is the closing off of the rear hall on the first floor to provide a lavatory. The original flooring exists throughout the house, except in the downstairs hall-dining room and kitchen, where the floors were replaced in the 1930s.

C. Sources of Information:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Key West City Directory, 1887, Bensel Co., Poughkeepsie, New York.

Monroe County Courthouse Deedbooks and Records, County Clerk's Office, Key West, Florida.

Monroe Land Title Company Abstract, Key West, Florida.

Sanborn Map of Key West, Sanborn Map Co., City of Key West, New York, 1889.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Chapin, George M., Florida Past and Present 1513-1913, Vol. II, S.J. Clark Publishing Co., Chicago. 1914. pp.109-110.

Harlee, William C., Kinfolks Vol. II, Searcy and Pfaff, Ltd., New Orleans, 1934.

c. Interviews:

Craig, Mrs. James J., present resident, Key West, Florida. n.d.

Reardon, Mrs. William H., daughter of John T. Sawyer, builder of the house, 609 Francis Street, Key West, Florida, July 12, 1965.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A fine example of late nineteenth century Key West architecture. The design of the house was influenced by the Classical Revival style, island architectural traditions and ship building techniques as evidence by its proportions, trim and construction.
2. Condition of fabric: Generally good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: A two-and-a-half story rectangular block, 37'-5" x 50'-3", with five bays across the front.
2. Foundations: Brick piers; two cisterns beneath the building are 4'-6" deep, stucco over masonry, do not appear to be structural.

3. Wall construction: Horizontal wood siding, lapped joints, 4" average exposure, traces of white paint remain, 4 1/2" corner boards.
4. Structural system: Balloon frame, 4" x 4" and 2" x 4" studs, 4" x 6" plates, lapped and butt splices and other joints mortise and tenon, 2" x 8" roof rafters 25" on center average. Floor framing is of 2" x 8" joists, beams 4" x 8".
5. Porches: Veranda extends across long dimension at both floor levels on southeast elevation; wood balustrade of turned, tapered balusters, rails which continue through porch columns; 7 1/2" x 7 3/4" columns continuous from first floor to soffit of entablature second floor, composite mold capitals; iron tie rods extend from entablature second floor to wall of house; second floor porch ceiling follows roof pitch to allow for windows into third floor; wood steps from first floor porch to grade, balustrade and square newels with cornice finials.

Modern wood steps at side (northeast doorway).

6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Central doorway, porch into stair hall, first and second floors; on southeast (front) of the building. Two two-panel wood shutters per opening, top panel operating louvers; hinged at jambs and swing out; two two-panel doors swing in; two-pane sash above doorway; simple Greek Revival trim flush with exterior siding.

Doorways between porches and rooms on southeast (front) of the building, four on each floor; two two-panel wood shutters per opening, top panel operating louvers; swing out; one four-panel wood door swings in; simple Greek Revival trim.

Side entrance doorway: Screen door (modern) swings out, four panel wood door swings in.

- b. Windows and shutters: Six-over-six-light double hung sash, insect screen lower half (modern); two wood shutters per opening, hung at jambs or at head to swing up and out; window trim flush with edge of siding, drip mold and sill project slightly; simple flush pediments in southeast front and southwest elevations.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable roof parallel to long dimension. Terne metal shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Boxed eaves and gutters, composite molded cornice, galvanized downspouts.

- c. Other: Scuttles in roof provide additional light and ventilation for third floor; they are hinged at the top to swing up and out.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First Floor: Central stair hall; living room and library on the left divided by multicentered, arched opening; dining room and kitchen over the right, rear (northwest end) of stair hall partitioned off to afford toilet; stairway to second floor. Two cisterns beneath the building are accessible through openings in living room and library floors (wood strips left out, no surrounds).
- b. Second floor: Central stair hall; bedroom and northeast side; bedroom and work shop southwest side. Stairway to third floor.
- c. Third floor: Central stair hall, opening in attic and to crawl spaces at eaves; one room each side with access to crawl space; two roof scuttles each room; camp ceiling in all third floor spaces.

- 2. Stairways: Stairway from first to second floor: Wood stairway, 7" risers, 11' tread; molded rail, turned balusters, octagonal newel with disc finial; partition under exterior string appears to have been added, soffit sheathed with wood strips.

Stairway from second to third floor: Wood stairway, 7" risers, 10" treads; balustrade similar to stairway from first floor; soffit of stairway sheathed.

- 3. Flooring: Wood floor of 5 1/2" wood strips; portions covered with 3 1/4" wood strips and miscellaneous patterned linoleum (covering applied to offset termite damage to original floor).
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Wood strips 3 1/4" wide, flush joints; 9 1/2" base boards; molded wood cornice.
- 5. Doorways and doors: Four-panel wood doors throughout in rectangular openings, heavy molded trim; multicentered arched opening between living room and library, molded wood trim, paneled soffit.
- 6. Decorative features: None of importance; painted center pieces and library cabinet work is modern; turned porch balusters are very thin, tapering from 1 3/5" to 3/4".
- 7. Hardware: Large amounts of original door hardware remain, porcelain door knobs and key hole covers, brass and cast iron works.

8. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating: None; no evidence of either original heating or cooking facilities; ceiling fan in library not original.
- b. Lighting: Electric, with fragments of early exposed system remaining, modern fixtures.
- c. Plumbing: Hand operated pump originally moved water from cistern to bath tub in second-floor space.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation:

The building is located on the north corner of Caroline and Simonton Streets on a fragment of the original site; it faces southeast on Caroline Street, across from the U.S. Post Office and Customs House. A wood picket fence at sidewalk edges and on property lines. Landscaping includes two large frangipani trees, palms, mahogany and other native or tropical foliage.

2. Two wood outbuildings are located northeast of the building.

Prepared by: F. Blair Reeves, AIA  
Supervising Architect  
HABS-Key West Project  
September 1967

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared in 1967 during a summer project jointly sponsored by the Old Island Restoration Foundation, Inc. of Key West, and the Historic American Buildings Survey. Twenty-two structures were recorded, ranging from commercial structures, residences and hospitals to a convent, a lighthouse, and the Memorial to the Victims of the disaster of the Battleship Maine.

The project was under the direction of F. Blair Reeves, AIA, Associate Professor, Department of Architecture, University of Florida. Measured drawings were prepared by student architects John D. Davenport and John F. Grimm of Texas A. and M. University, and John O. Crosby of the University of Florida. Mrs. Betty M. Bruce of the Old Island Restoration Foundation, Inc., and Professor Reeves were responsible for the historical and architectural data. They were assisted by members of the Foundation. J. Franks Brooks, Photographer, of Key West, supplied the photographs.